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# THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

## MISSIONS

### **Denominational Administration of Missions**

It is exhilarating to read an article once in a while in which you instinctively feel that the author has said just what he wanted to say without having trimmed the points off his statements lest they prick somebody's conscience. Joseph Ernest M'Afee, secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions, has written such an article which ought to stimulate thought on the part of his readers. He deplores the wastefulness of denominational administration of missions. The inefficiency due to duplication and overlapping challenges both the administrative ability and the fidelity of the mission boards. The writer understands the denominational system of missionary work to be the product of a competitive age. But he is a little too optimistic in his belief that such an age is passed and that a narrow sectarianism is universally condemned. It is worthy of note, however, that Mr. M'Afee finds the determining factor in his view of denominationalism in efficient administration of missions rather than in the provincial Scottish clans of "no-one-reckons-how-many-generations-past." This reminds us of what is being repeatedly thrust before our eyes, namely, that the missionary propaganda is having a reflex influence upon organized Christianity at home that is destined to result in startling changes. It is keenly felt by this mission secretary, who says, "All applaud the desire of evangelical Christians in China to come together in a genuine spiritual fellowship. The American mission boards doing work in China encourage the movement, and their supporting constituencies in America increase their contributions to show their favor." But in spite of the fact that it is clear as day in which direc-

tion the current is flowing, the mission boards refuse to make the required adjustments.

The writer appeals for united action in missionary work on behalf of Mexico. Now is the time to face the issue in respect to this field. He thinks that the task that confronts those engaged in the missionary work in Mexico to be sufficiently great and complicated even under a unified administration of the available resources. And he thinks success is well-nigh impossible if the attempt is to be made along the line of the present denominational confusion. The plan which is advocated is that the denominational boards initiate a central board of missions for Latin America, that it be supported for the next three or five years by the combined budgets of the denominational boards now conducting work in Latin America, that their resources be merged into one fund and administered with plenary administrative power by the central board. The writer thinks that such a plan is practicable, and he says that the missionary workers as well as the missionary supporters care a deal less for denominational distinctions than do their supporting agencies, and, where there has been the opportunity to cultivate it, a deeper fellowship has often been developed between workers of different denominational groups than prevails between those workers and others in their own group. Denominational "loyalty" is now buttressing much inefficiency in the use of missionary funds. Alaska is another field where the writer feels particularly that there is need of denominational unity in promoting missionary work.

### **Religious Liberty in Korea**

The representatives of missionary organizations carrying on work in Japan have been

agitated over the regulations for religious propagation in Korea. It has been thought in some quarters that under the direction of the Japanese government an effort had been made to place the Christian missions at a disadvantage. In view of the doubtful situation which obtains in Korea, the editor of the *Missionary Review of the World* has procured an authoritative statement respecting Japanese views of "Religious Liberty in Korea" from Hon. Midori Komatzu, Japanese commissioner of foreign affairs at Chosen. The Commissioner explains that since Korea now forms an integral part of Japan, and the constitutional guaranty of the empire for the freedom of religious belief applies equally to the new dominion, there is no ground for doubting that full religious liberty is allowed in Korea.

The constitution of the Empire of Japan, which was promulgated in 1889, provides that "Japanese subjects shall, within limits not prejudicial to peace and order and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects, enjoy freedom of religious belief." In explanation of this article we are told that "the free exercise of religion secured by the constitution to the individual against the power of the government is, therefore, confined to the realm of purely spiritual worship, that is, to relations between an individual and an extra-mundane thing." Then the words of Dr. Burgess are quoted as stating precisely the kind of freedom of religious belief guaranteed by the constitution of Japan: "So soon as religion seeks to regulate relations between two or more individuals, it becomes subject to the powers of the government and to the supremacy of the law, that is, the individual has in this case no constitutional immunity against government interference." The authorities of Japan hold strongly to the view that whatever a man's belief may be he has no right on the ground of serving his God to place himself outside of the law and so free himself from his duties to the state.

It is also stated that the Japanese government is more deeply concerned than the American government in regulating religious exercises. This is made necessary by the presence of the varied and numerous religions which exist within the Japanese Empire. In America Christianity is regarded as the only true religion, while in Japan, including Korea, the different religions and their branches number seventy, besides more than a dozen denominations of Christianity. In Korea the majority of the people are followers of Confucius, while the rest are mostly believers in Buddhism, only some 350,000 out of 15,000,000 souls being Christian converts. Manifestly this complex religious situation presents a knotty problem to the Japanese government. When Korea was incorporated into the empire, a proclamation was issued on the occasion of the new régime, which declared with regard to religious liberty in Korea as follows:

The freedom of religious belief is recognized in all civilized countries. There is indeed nothing to be said against anybody trying to give spiritual peace by believing in whatever religious faith he or she considers to be true. But those who engage in strife because of sectarian differences, or take part in politics, or pursue political intrigues under the name of religious propaganda, do injury to good manners and customs, and disturb public peace and order; and as doing such shall be dealt with by law. There is no doubt, however, that a good religion, be it Buddhism or Confucianism, or Christianity, has as its aim the improvement, spiritual as well as material, of mankind at large, and in this not only does it not conflict with the administration, but really helps it in attaining the object it has in view. Consequently all religions shall be treated equally, and, further, due protection and facilities shall be accorded their legitimate propagation.

The occasion for the misunderstanding of the attitude of the government toward Christian missions was the promulgation of amended "Regulations for Private Schools and Regulations for Religious Propagation."

The chief aim of this provision was to bring all educational organs, private as well as public, under a uniform and efficient system. Accordingly, religious teaching and ceremonies were excluded from the curriculum provided for private schools. At the time there existed in Korea 1,242 private schools, of which number 473 schools were under the management of foreign missionaries. Obviously the new provision had direct bearing upon the schools of Christian missionaries. But in order to alleviate the pressure which might be caused if the schools were immediately forced to give up religious teaching, the government granted a period of grace of ten years. It was the opinion of the authorities that, since the freedom of religious belief is constitutionally guaranteed, the separation of religion from politics and education is requisite. In this connection the writer reminds his American readers that religious instruction is excluded from the public schools of the United States. Thus we are informed that the provision respecting religious instruction in private schools was prompted by an effort to obtain a uniform and efficient system of education rather than by a desire to menace the activities of Christian missionaries.

#### **A Missionary's Love of Beauty**

Many people do not see any relation between religion and beauty; some people do. Margaret Stevenson, writing in the *International Review of Missions*, advocates "love of beauty" as one of the methods of approach to be used by the missionary in India. She, herself, is an ardent admirer of things beautiful; she has seen the influence of beauty in the lives of other people, and

she has felt it in her own life. There are three particulars in which she has discovered that the beautiful is closely associated with Christianity, namely, hymns, paintings, and architecture. She has found that the missionary to India neglects all three of these Christian treasures. This need not be; it ought not to be. If the love of beauty were cultivated and more definitely associated with the missionaries, it would be a potent factor in sustaining purity of mind and of life in the midst of the repulsive vices of the people of India. If the presence of things beautiful would contribute assistance such as Margaret Stevenson says, then its importance ought not to be minimized. Furthermore, she reminds her readers that the missionaries in India are fashioning the church of India which is to be. She rightly thinks that influence of the frescoes of the Middle Ages greatly helped the work of the church among the people, and that such an influence ought to be brought to bear upon the Christians of India. The eye, as well as the ear, should be held in mind by the teachers of religious education. She regrets that the Christian's hymns of India are, in so many instances, inferior. One of her fondest desires would be realized if the knowledge of the lack of beauty in the Christian hymns of India would move someone to contribute hymns that are more adequately suited to the needs of the people. She is familiar with the remarkable power of the hymns of Luther and Wesley; she would like to see hymns of beauty moving the people of India, as they have moved other peoples. Similarly, she appeals for the beautiful in the architecture of the buildings to be used by Christians in India.